



Montana Crime Reporting

Newsletter

2009 Crime Overview

Another year is gone, and it is time to "tally the crime numbers." Montana's crime reporting system is the Montana Incident-Based Reporting System, as most of the readers are already aware. In 2009, 98 of 111 (88%) non-tribal law enforcement agencies reported 12 months of electronic crime data to the MTIBRS, up from 89 of 110 in 2008. Additionally, three law enforcement agencies reported crime data on annual summary reports, down from 7 in 2008. In total, 101 of 111 (91%) non-tribal law enforcement agencies reported 12 months of crime data to the MBCC in 2009 covering 99% of Montana's total population (966,885 of a 2009 population estimate of 974,989).

Some scholars and officials have predicted that the national recession will generally cause crime to increase. Much debate has centered around this issue. The following is a preliminary analysis of "crime in Montana" as reported by Montana's law enforcement for 2008 and 2009. Despite the national recession, Montana's crime levels continue to decrease and have for the last several years. This trend also continues nationally.

Group A & B Incidents

Table 1—Group A & B Incidents

	2008	2009	% Change
Total Group A	52,874	50,348	-4.8%
Total Group B	27,780	26,662	-4.0%
Grand Total	80,654	77,010	-4.5%

Table 1 compares the total number of Group A and Group B incidents reported over the two year time period. Group A

incidents are more serious offenses, while group B incidents are lesser offenses such as writing bad checks and disorderly conduct. Multiple offenses can be reported per incident. Table 1 does not reflect the total number of offenses reported. The total number of group A incidents reported in 2009 decreased by almost 5% when compared to 2008. The total number of group B incidents fell 4%.

Homicides

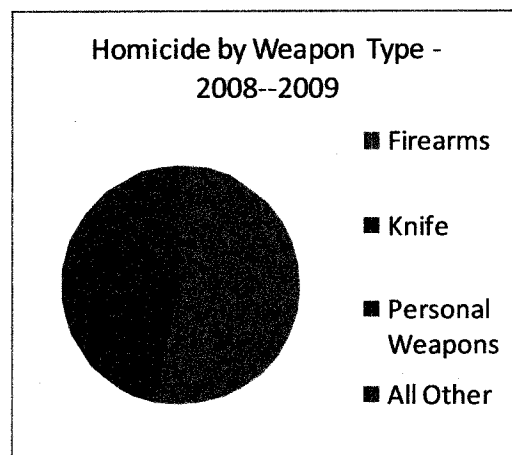
Table 2—Homicides

	2008	2009	Total
Incidents	30	26	56
Victims	33	28	61
Arrests	18	18	36

Table 2 shows the number of homicide incidents, victims, and persons arrested for homicide. In 2009, the number of homicide incidents and victims is slightly lower than reported in 2008.

Combined, the 56 homicide incidents occurred in 41 jurisdictions covering 26 counties. Law enforcement in Cascade Co. and Flathead Co. reported the most homicides over the two-year period (9 each). The two agencies that reported the most homicides over the two-year period are Great Falls Police Department and the Flathead Co. Sheriff's Office, each reporting seven respectively.

The Homicide by Weapon Type chart shows that more than half of all homicides are committed with the use of a firearm. Further, another half of the firearms used were handguns. None of the homicides were reported to be related to gang activity.



Violent Crime

The FBI's Uniform Crime reporting program classifies violent index crimes as homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Table 3—Violent Crimes

NOTE: Multiple offenses and victims can be reported per one incident.

	2008	2009	% Change	Total
Offenses	2,591	2,529	2.4%	5,120
Victims	2,953	2,883	2.4%	5,836
Arrests	1,128	1,124	0.35%	2,252

The total number of violent offenses and victims is slightly lower over 2008 levels. The number of arrests is relatively unchanged. The violent crime rate for 2009 is 261.6 per 100,000; down about 4% compared to the 2008 violent crime rate. Of the 5,120 violent offenses reported over the two-year period, about 1% were reported as "gang-related." Of those that were gang related, two thirds were reported in 2009.

Property Crime

Burglary, larceny/theft, and motor vehicle theft consist of the property crime index in Montana. It varies from the FBI's property crime index because the FBI scores arson as an index property crime.

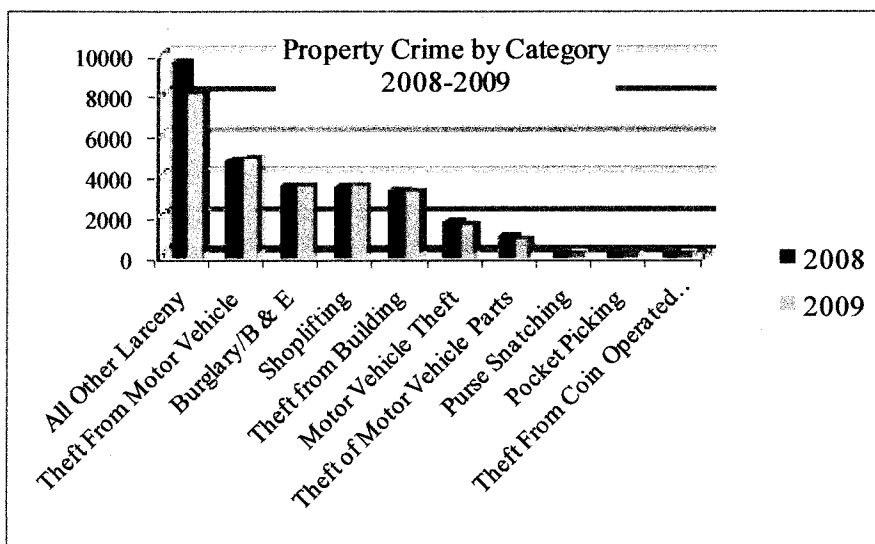
Table 3—Property Crime

	2008	2009	% Change
Property Crime Index	26,762	25,042	6.4%
Property Crime Rate per 100,000	2,826.3	2,590.0	8.4%
Arrests	5,440	5,339	1.9%

Table 3 displays the property crime index, the property crime rate, and the total number of arrests made for the three property crimes. The property crime index is down over 6% from 2008

and the property crime rate is down over 8% over the same time period. The number of burglaries reported is relatively unchanged over the two year period. Larceny/theft is down about 7%; shoplifting and theft from a motor vehicle experienced slight increases over 2008, 2.4% and 2.5% respectively.

The Property Crime by Category chart to the right shows the relative distribution of property crimes over the two year period. "All other larceny" is the most commonly reported property crime followed by "theft from a motor vehicle" then burglary, shoplifting, and theft from a building.



Drug Crime

Table 4—Drug Crime

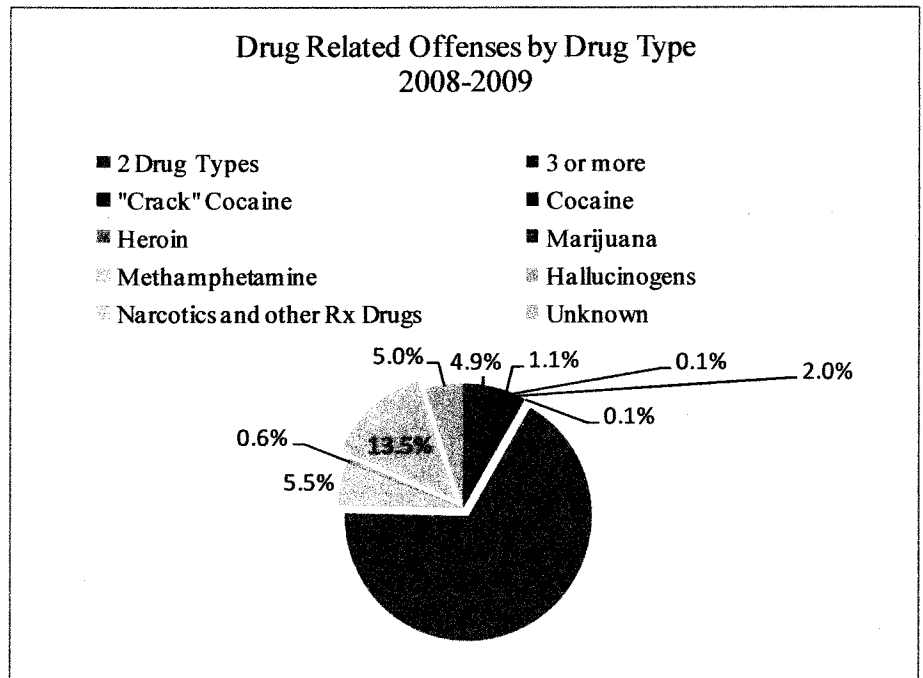
	2008	2009	% Change
Drug Crime	5,039	5,048	0.2%
Drug Crime Rate per 100,000	532.2	522.1	1.9%
Arrests	2,997	2,965	1.1%

Table 4 shows that the total number of drug crimes, the drug crime rate, and the number of drug arrests are all relatively unchanged over the two-year period. The most commonly reported

drug offenses are possession of dangerous drugs and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Drug Crime Continued...

The Drug Related Offenses by Drug Type chart shows the relative proportion of drugs seized during drug related offenses in 2008 and 2009 combined. Marijuana continues to be the top reported drug seized. The relative proportion of marijuana related offenses stayed the same from 2008 to 2009 at 67% respectively. In 1990, the proportion of marijuana related offenses compared to other drugs was about 90% (Crime in Montana, 2001 as cited in Crime in Montana 2004-2005.)

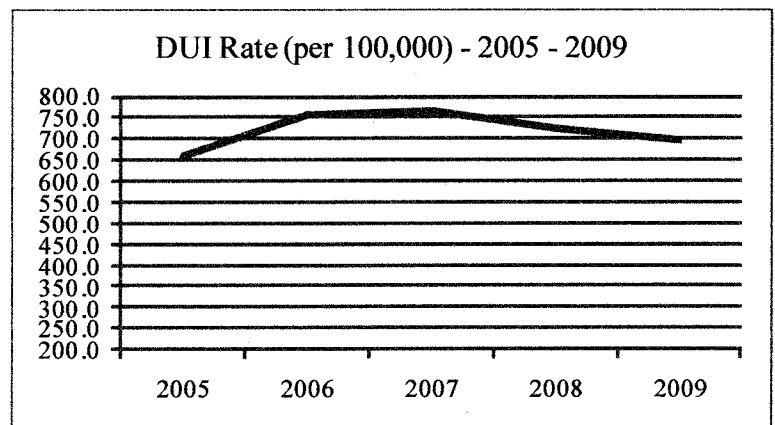


About 13.5% of the drug offenses over the two year time period are related to narcotic or other prescription drugs. Of those, about 6% are prescription narcotic related and 5% are related to "other drugs". Methamphetamine related offenses decreased 1% from 2008 to 2009 and down from almost 18% of drug related offenses in 2005 (Crime in Montana, 2004-2005). About 6% of all offenses involve 2 or more types of drugs.

NOTE: Montana also has seven drug task forces operating throughout the state. Their operations may not be reflected in this analysis.

DUI

The DUI rates in the DUI Rate chart to the right updates the rates as reported in previous *Crime in Montana* publications. Offenses that were dual reported have been eliminated from this analysis. However, DUIs as reported by Montana Highway Patrol are not reflected in this analysis, leading to an actual undercount of the total number of DUIs. Despite the limitation, the available data suggests that DUIs peaked in 2007 and has been decreasing to its current level.



DUI Continued...

The DUI rate for 2009 is about 698.0 per 100,000 population, slightly down about 3.8% from 2008. Over the five-year period, the mean (average) DUI rate is about 721 per 100,000.

Summary

This newsletter is a prelude to the forthcoming annual *Crime in Montana 2008-2009* report, which should be released in June 2010. In general, the incidents analyzed within this report are either decreasing or remaining level. This preliminary analysis "adds to" the *Crime in Montana 2007-2008*, as such, 2008 data reported in this report may not exactly match what was reported in the previous publication. As this is a preliminary analysis, statistics reported in the forthcoming *Crime in Montana 2008-2009* may be subject to slight adjustments. Major adjustments are not anticipated.

National Youth Gang Survey

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, through the *2008 National Youth Gang Survey*, reports that about one third of the sample population reported gang problems in 2008. The number of gangs increased by about 28% from 2002 to 2008, but the number of gang members only increased 6% over the same time period. However, smaller cities estimated a 35% increase in the number of gangs over the 2002-2008 time period.

From 2007 to 2008, the study reported a negligible 7.7% decrease in 'gang-problem jurisdictions', a negligible 2.3% increase in gangs, and a negligible 1.8% decrease in the number of reported gang members. Suburban counties and larger cities reported increases in the number of gangs from 2007-2008. Small cities and rural counties reported decreases in 'gang-problem jurisdictions', number of gangs, and number of gang members over the same time period. Rural counties reported a 23.2% and 20.9% decreases in the number of gangs and gang members respectively.

In terms of gang related crimes and violence, among the respondents who reported gang activity, over 40% reported they experienced increases in gang-related aggravated assaults, drug sales, and firearms usage. Large cities, (250,000 or more) reported a 10% increase in the number of gang related homicides from 2002 to 2008.

Source: Egley, Jr. Arlen; James C. Howell, and John P. Moore. "Highlights of the 2008 National Youth Gang Survey." *OJJDP Fact Sheet. March 2010*. U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

MTIBRS Standards

The Montana Incident-Based Reporting Standards Handbook is available at:
<http://www.mbcc.mt.gov/Data/CrimeDataSubmissions/CrDataSub.asp>.